The COMMONWEAL

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Week of Disappointment

LAST WEEK in all the villages of Europe, in the factories, in the homes, in the armies, men heard that certain events had taken place and tried to understand what they could mean. A conversation which before and since the beginning of the war had been between statesmen last week was prolonged into the hearts of men. They heard that Mr. Welles could go where they could not go, could learn from actual contact with the heads of nations what they, disciplined, resigned, courageous and sacrificed, could not possible learn for themselves: there was someone moving about Europe who would know whether or not peace was desired by the statesmen, whether or not peace was a possibility. They knew that communication, other than that effected by speeches, had been reestablished, and it was impossible for them to imagine that this renewed contact could be used for anything but a sincere effort for peace. They felt that the United States might draw men into peace by some sort of imagined attraction; that it would break down the stubborn dialogue which made a continuing war automatic. They knew that if there existed a way to peace, the Vatican would not remain silent. Indeed from a source vaguely connected with the Vatican there was released an unofficial statement in eleven (or twelve) points which it was assumed came from Ribbentrop and represented at least a basis for a peace Germany would accept. Everywhere men talked of and hoped for peace. They hoped to such an extent that in the Allied countries the inspired press decided overnight that Mr. Welles was a menace to war.

Back to the Battlefield

The menace was not serious. Mr. Roosevelt restated the moral basis for a peace which, for the present, can only imply the pursuit of the war. The eleven point statement was disavowed by the Germans, rejected by the Allies. Hitler and Mussolini met at the Brenner Pass, not apparently to discuss peace. The Germans bombed Scapa Flow; the British bombed the Sylt air base. In the customers' rooms of countless brokers in many countries things looked all right again; all over the world people read the morning newspaper, heard the radio and went about their business a step nearer to despair.

The week of disappointment has had immediate results. The politicians have turned in confused vindictiveness on their leaders. Daladier has resigned: Reynaud or another will head a new ministry, for the new mood of European despair now requires new men: not men who started the war, nor men who will finish it, but men with a blind conviction to carry it on. In the second place the hope of evasion from the central problem of the military situation, which has been and will remain the Western Front, is greatly lessened. With the fall of Finland there is no present possibility of diversion in the North: German and Italian agreement shows signs of success in their aim to neutralize and make use of the Balkans. The war is the war on the Western Front.

For Americans this will simplify the situation. Our attention has been diverted by Finland, by the Balkans, by strategical considerations, from the central fact that great countries, great armies, face each other across a fortified frontier. Germans as well as French and British have enough reason left to shrink from the inevitable horror of an attempt to reach a decision in this zone. But they are reduced to facing the fact that it is on this front, and within the countries it separates, that a final military conclusion must be sought. All other adventures will contribute to that result but will remain incidental to it. And the belligerents' will to face these facts has hardened noticeably this week in exact proportion to their disappointment in any hope for peace. The precipitation of warfare on a great scale will be the consecration of catastrophe. American action might help to avert it: the entire will and intelligence of our Administration, the prayers and hope and intelligence of our people who are the reality of the Administration's power for good, must concentrate in a common effort to find a way for negotiation.

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Laws and Men

IT SEEMS a salutary rule of practical wisdom to analyze all new legislation in terms of the harm that it can do as well as in terms of the positive good it is intended to effect. In the same way every tool of power must constantly be regarded as a potential weapon for iniquity just as much as it is an actual force for righteousness. There has been a great deal of belly-aching recently about the FBI in the Stalinist press. It seems hard to justify it. The FBI seems so far to have done a useful job and done it effectively. Yet the more perfect its organization, the more smoothly and efficiently it operates, the more we should view it with profound (if sympathetic) suspicion. In a country like ours, where startling political reversals have not infrequently taken place in the past, this is no idle worry. The days of A. Mitchell Palmer are not yet by any means pre-history.

Eternal Vigilance

Before Congress there is a minor flood of anti-sedition and anti-alien bills every one of which is dangerous. There is Senator Reynold's most recent brain-child—a bill which would prohibit substantially all emigration for five years. Then there is the malodorous bill introduced by Representative Smith. And at the other end of the scale is an offering of Senator David I. Walsh's, the laudable purpose of which is to prevent mutiny in the armed forces of the US. But there already exists legislation to take care of that dread contingency, and it would be one-two-three for any smart district attorney to use the Walsh bill (if it ever became law) against almost anyone who wrote or said anything pacifistic or critical of our armed forces. In addition this bill, like most of the others, permits search for and confiscation of literature on war-time search warrants—an extremely dangerous invasion of the bill of rights. All such laws are not only by definition bad law, because they needlessly and indefinitely circumscribe the area of men's civil freedom, but they are also bad in offending human dignity.

A Kind Word for Great Britain

THE VOICE of blame in these past years—and notably in these past months—has certainly not spared Great Britain. There is little that a searchingly critical reading of British history might suggest about the ethics of imperialism, about the practices of compromise morality, about the habit of not letting one's righteous right hand know what one's predatory left hand has grabbed, that has gone unuttered. But while this mood, which it is not stretching a point to call disillusioned, prevails—indeed, all the more because it prevails—it is just and right to note the items in the other side of the balance. For instance, Britons are still saying what they think. This is one of their special achievements; it constitutes for every other civilized country in the world an example that is literally beyond price—and it constitutes in the present circumstances a phenomenon that is almost beyond wonder. When some disorderly heckler at a recent speech by a government official was hustled out, and cried, "Where are you taking me?" the speaker's reply took the form of the boast, "Not to a concentration camp!" At the news of the Finnish defeat, Lloyd George (whom to name is not necessarily to praise) could express his fury at what he believes to be the government's fatally dilatory tactics in a public outcry that was cabled all over the world. And just yesterday the British censors, for rather shabbily suppressing details of the rescue of a British air squadron commander by the very group of German airmen whose planes he had been shooting down, were excoriated in Parliament by the Labor leader from Glasgow. It is to be hoped that Britain will be morally braced by the dosage of criticism she is getting; but whether or no, here is something for which she cannot receive too much praise.

Speech Still Free

New Low-Cost Homes Are on the Horizon

IT IS rather startling and highly encouraging to find that some 60,000 new $2,500 homes were built in the United States last year. The *Architectural Forum* estimates that the total this year will reach 100,000. This indicates that the paralyzing problem of financing can be met. An *A. F.* survey ascribes success primarily to mass production and quantity purchase of materials and equipment. Other helpful factors in a descending order of importance included: elimination of basement, standardization, simplicity of construction, owner assistance in actual construction. *Christian Social Action* and the *Michigan Catholic* tell of a five-room double wall concrete house built by the owner in his spare time for less than $1,000, fixtures and all. The originator, Charles Madden of Rochester, Mich., waits only for FHA approval before sending out blueprints to everyone interested. The USHA is to build 1,300 experimental farm homes in six widely scattered midwestern and southern states, which with land will cost under $2,000 and rent for $50 a year or less. At long last new homes are within the reach of the nation's low-income groups. Builders claim that the high hourly rate for labor is the principal stumbling block, with cost of materials and the lack of accessible, reasonably-priced land close behind. The opportunity to integrate low-cost housing with sound decentralization, subsistence gardening and more independent family life is greater than ever.

Pay as You Build

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Eight Million Dollars for Three Cents a Day

Group Hospital Insurance

ONE OF the promising ventures in the field of medical cost control is the group non-profit hospitalization service popularly known as the three-cents-a-day plan. It is not confined to this locality; but since its inception here five years ago, it has so thoroughly proved itself, both practically and professionally, that the story of its rise might serve as a mark for any other locality to shoot at. The current report shows that the service here has now 1,350,000 enrolled subscribers—about a sixth of the population of the whole metropolitan area. It annually disburses for their hospitalization needs something like eight million dollars, and it has built up assets of over four million and a surplus of near a million and a half. It may well be that one reason for the success of the non-profit hospitalization insurance plan is that it can show great masses of people how they may pay their hospital bills almost without pain; and meanwhile it has nothing directly to do with the question which vexes most of the counsels relating to group practice: the question of how to maintain the patient-and-doctor association which prevails in private practice. But even though this may explain part of the smooth progress of the hospitalization plan, it does not take away from the credit of the public, in alertly and intelligently backing that plan; the increase of subscribers in New York last year was a quarter of a million. The American Hospital Association has quite properly conferred its certificate of special approval upon the service.

The Conservative and Liberal Dilemma

Untangle Or Cut?

FOR IMPORTANT practical purposes, "conservative" in the US means working for the solution of political, social and economic problems *more* through the individualistic activity of private and corporate persons; while "liberal" means working on those problems *more* through the federal government. Neither side very seriously considers activity through intermediate groups: local governmental, cooperative, syndical, professional, communal. Both sides seem to refuse to admit that on their own premises there is a real dilemma. The NLRB, SEC and Budget fights show how closely the issue is joined. "Conservatives" claim that business can't progress with its work of production, hiring and distribution, while it is shackled by government, threatened with greater interference and regulation, harassed by government-sponsored unions and labor laws, highly taxed, and attacked by government competition. "Liberals" claim that the people's government cannot leave families unemployed and unprovided for, cannot leave labor at the tender mercies of bosses, cannot leave our resources and productive plant rotting—that, in general, government cannot lay off until private enterprise has succeeded in taking up the socially necessary work to be done. The "liberals" have the advantage of sentimental appeal, but it seems inescapable that both sides are equally telling the truth.

Strangely enough, if this knot is cut and not untangled, the logical solution from both ends would most likely be the same totalitarianism, one starting from socialism, the other from fascism, but both speedily and unhappily coming to a like tyranny. But the paralysis which checks useful development, and threatens these Draconian results, is not brought so much by the seeming dilemma as by the emotional attitude toward it. Both sides might well work harder in the fields intermediate between the individual and the federal government. Conservatives could well spend more energy taking over jobs from the government than complaining about how the government performs them. Liberals ought to worry more about the necessity and effectiveness of government tasks, and realize that theft by the government of a job well done is the most dangerous kind of stealing. To avoid the bitterest sort of tragedy, conservatives must adjust themselves to the necessity of conducting business within stricter limits of organization and exploitation, and liberals have to recognize the necessity of relying on more tools than only the federal government.

Charity Doesn't Stay Home

Children's Crusade

MOST WAR RELIEF work and work for the refugees concentrates your mind and emotions on the world's destruction, and renders even more bitter and stoical the modern's irony and pity. But the Children's Crusade for Children, to be carried on all during April among the thirty million public, private and parochial school pupils is a happier and more positive movement. In the last week of April, the school children will bring a penny for each of their years, and the fund (depleted by no overhead at all) will be turned over to the Protestant, Jewish, Non-Sectarian and Catholic relief agencies which can put the money to the best use for the outcast refugee children of the world. "The animating idea of the Children's Crusade—to give our American children an opportunity to make, themselves, a generous gesture of friendliness, direct to other children—will help counteract the negative impression of overwhelming evil in human life." It is up to the schools and other teachers to keep a livelier sense of distant injustice and unhappiness from comfortably obscuring similar evils nearer home. And that is easy. True charity becomes more intense as it expands.

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The Closed Farm

Various ways to improve or increase farm production, with emphasis on biological balance.*

By **Henry Tetlow**

EVERY beginning farmer dreams of devising new methods or means that will vastly improve or multiply farm production, or will cut down its labor and costs. The latest and perhaps most spectacular scheme to intrigue the unwary is the fad for water-farming: "hydroponics," I have heard it called. This is the "science" of growing vegetables, fruits and flowers in wire trays suspended in tanks of chemical solutions, instead of in the good earth. Some amazing experimental results have been obtained: potatoes cropped at the rate of twenty-five hundred bushels to the acre (a good average outdoor crop is a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five) for example. The hydroponic experimenters, however, insist that their scheme is not yet commercially practicable. Although the chemical content is cheap, the cost of building and maintaining the factory runs much too high.

Water culture is the inevitable outcome of the discovery made just about a century ago by the great German chemist Liebig, that plants feed by indirection on inorganic chemicals; and that if you apply these to the soil you can grow bigger and — superficially — better crops. My great-grandfather was a devout disciple of Liebig. Time and again, when he and his family were trying unsuccessfully to wrest a living from the Jersey pine barrens, he would tell his sons:

"Thou shouldst read Liebig."

Sixty years later Grandfather Tetlow went Liebig and all the other agro-chemists one better. As part of his soil rehabilitation program he needed potash, a relatively expensive synthetic plant food. He conceived the idea of substituting soda ash, which is much cheaper and—he argued —pretty much the same thing. At that stage of the game he was cropping alfalfa. The resultant harvests not only bore him out: for years they were the talk of the countryside.

However, despite a century of experiment, and despite the universal enthusiasm for it (there is an aphorism, made in Germany, which says any soil is good soil, if it will hold fertilizer) there is still a serious objection to the use of inorganic chemical fertilizers. Anyone who has tried to run a farm or garden solely on them knows that sooner or later the land so treated becomes stiff, untractable, unworkable, producing smaller and smaller crops in response to bigger and bigger doses of the synthetic foods.

This is because earth so treated, to the exclusion of animal and vegetable manures, becomes deficient in humus (rotted vegetable material). The deficiency really goes deeper than that: the humus is fundamentally a cultural medium for the growth of soil bacteria. The good earth so teems with this bacterial life that, far from the chemical carrier of the German aphorism—it may almost be said to be a living organism itself. Since chemically treated soil becomes progressively unproductive as its bacterial life is depleted, we cannot but reason that this bacterial life is a vital element in all vegetable productions and, ultimately, in all organisms nourished on vegetable foods.

Where, out of inorganic chemicals and distilled water, are the hydroponists going to get this bacterial content?

When as children we studied "physiology and hygiene," we were told that one who drank only distilled water would gradually waste away; that it is the organic matter in living water rather than the liquid itself that is essential to life. Even with undistilled water it strikes me hydroponic vegetables are going to be seriously deficient; instead of living organisms they will be border line creations akin to those strange flowerings that can be grown by immersing a lump of anthracite coal in vinegar. Before I include them in my diet, I shall want to see them tried out on a-plenty guinea pigs.

Hormones

If chemistry is to make further contributions to agriculture it will probably be in quite another direction: the application of hormone dusts and solutions to germination. Writing in *Science* for August 12, 1938, Watson Davis tells of experiments being made along this line. One gathers that you can roll a china door knob in hormone dust, plant it in sand, and it will sprout roots. Well, maybe the hormones won't go quite that far, but they do some pretty extreme things—like growing root "whiskers" even on blossoms. Their chief virtue, as so far described, is that they grow

* This article is a chapter from "On Medlock Farm," published March 27 by Wm. Morrow & Co., $2.50.

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roots on seeds and slips many days before they otherwise would sprout.

"Wheat on the western plains," says Watson Davis, "may be able to get its roots in the soil faster and more securely if the seed wheat is dusted with hormones. In some cases this may mean the difference between getting a crop and not getting it. Winds are likely to blow the young sprouting seeds out of the ground if the roots do not anchor them speedily. Since the treatment causes the roots to 'dig in' promptly, wheat so treated may withstand wind and drought at an earlier time after seeding. . . . The treatment costs only about a half-cent an acre."

Touching that last good news, the same author later gives a fascinating statistic on the potency of naphthylacetic acid, one of the synthetic hormone materials: "It is effective in a water solution containing one part per hundred million. A single pound of it would make ten train loads, with each train of one hundred tank cars, and every car containing twelve thousand five hundred American gallons."

Just remember this—and that naphthylacetic acid costs about ten dollars a pound—when you step out to buy a four-ounce tin of hormone dusting powder. I myself have not yet bought any: I borrowed an ounce or two from a neighbor who got it from one of our nearby paint factories. I am about to test its potency on a beautiful but non-reproductive flowering shrub, a sport of the lilac family.

The same nation that produced the aphorism about chemical soils has also produced a new school of agricultural philosophy diametrically opposite. I say "new"; actually it is fifteen years since thoughtful Germans first observed the evil results of a too-enthusiastic use of chemical plant foods. It was Rudolf Steiner who, while a guest of Count Keyserling, in June, 1924, promulgated what has since become known as the bio-dynamic theory of agriculture. Ever since then the theory has been in course of scientific application and proof.

Bio-dynamics

In its broad aspects it is as simple as tit-tat-toe, three in a row. Consigning the synthetists to the category of Hamlet's politician ("one that would circumvent God"), it recognizes the law of biological balance and proposes that, instead of trying to circumvent the law, man should yield to it, adapt himself to it, try to make it work better and better.

Biological balance was first described by Darwin. He illustrated its operation by explaining that if there were no house cats in England there would be no clover either: house cats eat field mice; if they did not, the mice would become so numerous as to destroy the earthworms, on which they feed in turn. Earthworms turn over the soil in clover fields—turn it over at the rate of tons per acre per year. Without this natural cultivation the clover would sicken and die.

Darwin, I say, first described the phenomenon of biological balance. But as we might suspect, some two hundred years earlier Shakespeare had marked it and pondered it. It was, indeed, one of his major preoccupations. I doubt there is one of the plays that does not mention it somewhere. It is one of the best evidences that, whether his name was Shakespeare or Smith, the same man wrote all the plays. The most famous discussion of biological balance is, of course, in the first scene of the fifth act of "Hamlet": "That skull had a tongue in it and could sing once. . . . And now: My Lady Worm's. . . . Here's fine revolution, an we had the trick to see it."

(That last line is infinitely pathetic to me: the lament of the world's greatest mind struggling against the unbeatable odds of universal, abysmal scientific ignorance.)

Or again: "Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bung hole. . . . For to follow him thither with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returned unto dust. The dust is earth. Of earth we make *loam*. And why of that loam whereunto he was converted might they not stop a beer barrel."

Shakespeare, you see, three centuries before the bio-dynamists, saw that you can only take out of the land as much as you put into it; that everything living on the face of the earth comes out of the earth; that however odious it may be "to lie in cold obstruction and to rot," life itself is immortal, going on and on and on around the wheel in one form or another.

The inorganic chemists were so firmly seated on the bandwagon, and the proof of Steiner's thesis has been such a long, slow, tedious job, that the bio-dynamists are only now just beginning to come into their own. They have got results, and they are starting to talk about them. The results have not been as sensational or spectacular as growing potatoes or excelsior or whiskers on begonia blossoms, which is all right with me: most things that look too good to be true usually turn out to be so eventually. But they have been substantial. They are summarized in a book by Dr. Ehrenfried Pfeiffer called "Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening."* They show that where farms have been converted from inorganic chemical methods to bio-dynamic, the progress of diminishing returns has been arrested, in some instances reversed.

While these results do not look frightfully im-

* Reviewed by Mr. Tetlow in THE COMMONWEAL, November 11, 1938.

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pressive when reduced to statistics (for example, the average grain yield per acre on one experimental farm was only raised from eighteen hundred and fifty-five pounds to twenty-one hundred and eighty-four pounds ten years after the conversion to bio-dynamitry) the important fact remains that a trend was reversed. Also, while the bio-dynamic method involves more "trouble," i.e., more labor—and who, in these days, can object to an innovation that means more work for more people?—yet the differential between added labor costs and decreased fertilizer cost favors bio-dynamics.

Animal husbandry

Bio-dynamic research has extended beyond plant to animal life. Dairy herds fed bio-dynamically raised feeds have shown notable increases both in milk production and in average herd fertility. In poultry experiments with bio-dynamic feeds, decided increases in egg production were recorded—individual eggs were slightly smaller, but gross weight of bio-dynamic eggs exceeded gross weight of the controls. And these eggs all showed marked improvement in keeping quality and fertility. Going a step further, Professor Rost has demonstrated a relationship between the potassium content of food and the recurrence of thrombosis: the more of the one the more of the other. He says thrombosis is on the make amongst us humans, and suggests one reason for it is the increased use of potassium chemical fertilizers.

Dr. Rost has done more than that for us: he has at last got something on spinach:

> With spinach about two-thirds of the mineral substances go over into the cooking water and are poured out with it. But lately there is a strong tendency not to pour off this cooking water as was formerly the case, but to utilize it, because these mineral substances are considered something especially important for human nourishment. . . . Cooked spinach from which one does not pour off the cooking water contains about three times as much potassium as spinach prepared by the old method.

Bio-dynamic research has led to the enunciation of a principle that is right up my alley: the principle of the "closed farm." If it is true that livestock do better, equally with vegetation, under bio-dynamic treatment, then the farm should quarantine itself not only against non-bio-dynamic fertilizers but also against feeds so raised. Each farm should create for itself a delicate biological balance system whereby enough livestock is maintained to produce an adequate supply of natural manures, yet not so much but what the farm can produce all its own foods.

This is of course the objective we have been working toward on Medlock Farm ever since 1932. It is not one easily attained: the problem is much like the perennial puzzle of how to make bread, butter and jam finish all even—when you are eating bread, butter and jam. Yet it is worth struggling for, for more reasons than one. It is certainly cheaper; it pretty nearly compels diversification, with all its attendant advantages including the not so obvious one demonstrated by the bio-dynamists: that small plantings of wide varieties of crops is one of the best practical defenses against the spread and increase of insect and fungus pests. Finally, if the bio-dynamists are right, those who live on food raised under their system should be healthier and enjoy a greater life expectancy.

Part of the research has been into the affinities that exist in plant life. Even those of us unblest with "green fingers" realize that some plants flourish better in the presence of certain other plants. If I read them aright, the bio-dynamists are fairly on the way to announcing what will be glad news indeed to all part-time farmers and small-time gardeners: to wit, that as the bio-dynamic garden approaches perfection, it will become not only increasingly unnecessary but finally and positively wrong to do any weeding. The augmented strength of the closed farm's benign plant life will crowd all the undesirable weeds back into their proper obscurity.

Along the same line, insect tastes have been studied. Pfeiffer reports of fruit trees pestered with aphids that he planted nasturtiums about the trees and sprayed them with an extract of nasturtium.

> Such plantings are effective because the nasturtium contains a strong aromatic substance which also penetrates the ground through its roots. This the trees can take up through their roots and bring into their sap stream, making changes in it which are imperceptible to us but very evident to the fine organs of smell and taste possessed by the insects. Result: the aphids disappear.

Finally, just to show their minds are not closed, the bio-dynamists have done some research on the relation of inorganic substances to agriculture: enough to show that our present knowledge is still exceedingly rudimentary. We were just speaking about potassium. Stoklasa has conducted an experiment with potassium which proves conclusively that the mere juxtaposition of "potassium *hung in sealed test tubes over growing plants* [italics mine] alters the rate of growth of the plants."

Reassurance

"Tell the disciples and Peter" (Matt. xvi, 7)

"Tell the disciples." Then he might have thought—
He thrice-denying ere the first cock crew!—
The message not for him. But it was brought,
"Tell Peter, too!"

THEODORE MAYNARD.

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War on the Pacific

What can come out of having no policy: "They can't do that to us!"

By **Glen Perry**

WITH the attention of the American public riveted on developments in the European war, and with what appears to be a growing determination in this country to keep out of it, the question arises as to whether there is not more danger of the United States becoming involved in the East than in the West.

Certainly Japanese-American relations at the present time are on a far from satisfactory basis, as is instanced by reports that Tokyo regards a $20,000,000 trade loan by the Export-Import Bank to China as an unfriendly act (although none of the three nations concerned is officially at war). It would not take very much to set in motion a train of events that would lead either to disastrous loss of face internationally by this country, or to war.

So far as Europe is concerned, it seems reasonably safe to say that while the war continues in its present form there is little danger of this country becoming involved. Should unrestricted air attacks be launched, or should it become apparent that the Allies are losing, the picture might change.

Yet with the American attitude toward the Russo-Finnish struggle having given no hint of willingness even to approach extremes to help a stricken country for which the United States holds warm friendliness, this is to be doubted. Friendship and sympathy will not bring this country into European war, else we would have given Finland any aid she wanted, and have answered Russian protests by asking what, if anything, she proposed to do about it. American participation in Europe's battling could come about, I believe, only through the growth of a feeling that a triumphant Germany would ultimately threaten our national well-being so seriously that we might as well fight and get it over with. This feeling does not exist now, so far as I have been able to see.

On the surface there are mixed motives in our attitude toward Europe. But certainly the dominant note is that of refraining from any act that might tend to involve us, despite our feeling for England, France, Finland. This is not the case where our relations with Japan are concerned. There our national reaction seems wholly mixed, with a desire to force Nippon out of its imperialistic path existing side by side with a disinclination to carry the desire too far.

American disapproval of Japan's maneuvers in China is evident, just as American disapproval of German and Russian tactics is evident. The difference is that this country has implemented the feeling toward Japan, and has set the stage for even greater implementation, while carefully avoiding any such action in regard to the European aggressors.

The China "incident"

America's position with regard to Japan centers on the China incident, and is for the most part an expression of humanitarian resentment against what appears to be unprovoked, unmoral, and unjustifiable aggression against a peaceful nation, and against the ruthless way in which that aggression has been driven home. This feeling has already resulted in a good many heated words, and in informal, small-scale boycotts on Japanese-made articles. It is a commendable resentment, and I share it.

There are some more definite matters involved, too. I quote from Frank H. Hedges, writing from Tokyo for the Washington *Post*: "The treatment accorded American treaty rights, American business firms, and American individuals there [China] have been such that American friendship and economic cooperation with Japan are impossible until this treatment is drastically altered."

In the background is a feeling, best exemplified in the continuing editorial barrage laid down by the New York *Daily News*, that if Japan succeeds in China, she will turn her attention in no friendly way to the United States, and that it is desirable to smash Nippon with an embargo when she is in bad shape. I doubt whether the average citizen goes that far in his thinking. If he did, there would be an embargo right now.

Japan's position is completely different, for Japan is in an extremely critical situation. The war in China has not gone well. The drain on her treasury, her people and her economy has been heavy. Bitter fighting has not consolidated her position on the Asiatic mainland. Chiang Kai-shek has not given up, and Japanese sovereignty extends but a little way from the towns and railroads she holds. All around are implacable guerilla fighters, inflicting minor blows that in cumulative total amount to major smashes.

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Worse yet, from the Japanese point of view, it has not been possible to make of China a storehouse of materials on which to draw. Japan has not been able to cash in on the tremendous expenditures she has made, and doubts are growing as to whether she will ever be able to do so. Putting it in another way, she has not been able to make herself independent of the United States, her greatest customer and her greatest source of supply.

What alternatives, then, confront Japan? One is to give up the attempt on China, writing off the lives and money spent there in an effort to reestablish genuinely friendly relations with the United States as well as other interested powers. Another is to keep on the present course as long as possible, seeking, come what may, to hammer through. Neither is attractive from a practical point of view, yet it is difficult to see what compromise solution could be reached as long as China continues to resist, and perhaps after. Another puppet state, like Manchukuo, would hardly do. The odds favor continuation of the present policy for want of a convenient way to escape from it, with efforts to make it appear to better advantage in the eyes of the world.

This will mean that Japan's relations with the United States will not improve and will probably grow worse. It is in that light that the current situation must be viewed, granted that unexpected things sometimes happen. The Japanese citizenry, already growing restive, might force a change of policy. Japan, worn down, might suddenly collapse. China might also collapse. The United States might become so preoccupied with European affairs as to forget about the Orient. But the chances run the other way.

As things stand now, our commercial relations with Japan are on what amounts to a day-to-day basis. The trade treaty betwen the two countries was allowed to expire, and there is no renewal in sight. This is not a particularly onerous state of affairs for the United States, but it is both burdensome and downright dangerous for Japan. Allowing the treaty to lapse was a very definite warning to that country.

A warning, of course, is a threat. And the threat is that a total embargo can be dropped down on Japanese trade with us at any time Congress deems it desirable. The warning was not without its effect, as was evidenced by the advent of the Yonai government. There is doubt, however, whether Admiral Yonai, friendly to the United States though he is, can exert sufficient influence to overcome the powerful Nipponese military class and reach a basis for negotiations leading toward a new trade agreement.

Suppose that the Panay sinking had happened yesterday, instead of late in 1937. Suppose some new incident, precipitated by an over-zealous minor Japanese army officer, should suddenly enrage the United States. Can it be doubted that a total embargo would be voted at once? I think not.

Since such action would not seriously injure the United States economically, Japan's only weapon against it would be force. And she would have to fight it, for it would do more damage than could any military attack. Unbroken, it would shatter her economy irretrievably in a matter of months. Its imposition, then, would bring to nothing arguments that a nation will not make a war that it has little hope of winning.

Japan would be confronted with certain destruction by economic starvation on one hand, and war, with some chance, however slight, of success on the other. And as between a course obviously fatal and one only probably fatal, what nation would hesitate? Anyway, there is no evidence yet that Japan's militarists have any inferiority complex regarding their chances in a fight with the United States.

Japan's trade

A few facts about Japan's trade relation with us will show how serious the embargo would be. She obtains 90 percent of her iron, 90 percent of her aluminum, 65 percent of her petroleum, 45 percent of her lead and nearly all her cotton from this country. Cut these things off, along with the rest of her purchases here; close the American market to her silk, her cheap manufactured goods and other products, and war is no longer the greater evil.

The argument has been advanced that Japan is in such a parlous condition that she could not undertake a war against us, no matter how strong the compulsion, and that the embargo would therefore be without danger to the United States. This is to overlook the fact that Japan has an accumulation of naval supplies of war—and it would be a naval war, without question. It is to overlook the fact that Japan's first move would be to gain an immensely valuable source of supplies by taking the Dutch East Indies, which she could probably do with England's fleet held in the Atlantic.

Most important, it is to overlook the fact that war is a manifestation of the economy of totalitarian states. Things must be bought somehow, and lacking foreign exchange they buy them with men and materiel. It is costly against real opposition, but to the totalitarian state it apparently seems worth it. And Japan, in the grip of her militarists, is a totalitarian state.

Thus the question is not whether we will go to war with Japan, but whether Japan will attack us. In this connection, it appears that the American people have a naïve faith in the impossibility of war unless it be formally declared by Congress. This in the face of the following facts: Russia

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was officially at peace with Finland; Germany with Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and Austria; Japan with China.

This feeling, comforting as any escape reaction, boils down to a belief that the United States cannot become involved in war against her will. It just isn't so. If the United States is attacked by another nation, we are at war whether we want to be or not. And there are American possessions conveniently near Japan, beyond the effective range of our fleet. Japan, as a retaliatory measure to an embargo, could undoubtedly take the Philippines, Guam, Wake and Midway Islands. Can it be doubted that war would follow? I think not.

As to the form such a war might take, Fletcher Pratt, expert on naval affairs, in his most interesting book, "Sea Power and Today's War," writes that Japan would hardly seek a stand-up fight with the American navy, but would seek to reduce this country to a passive defense of the Pacific. He writes:

> It is not the validity of such a defense but its entail that would disturb us. A passive defense would involve Japanese domination of the Eastern seas. Americans would have to do without rubber (there might be enough for military purposes, but nothing left over) and without all the articles made of rubber; without silk or pineapples, without tea, without tungsten for electric light filaments and alloy purposes. Sugar would rise in price. There would be a shortage of tin for the cans in which foods are packed, of the fibres from which rope is made, of many drugs, of wool for our clothes.
>
> There would be financial difficulties attendant on the loss of all Eastern investments and desperate poverty in the South, where the cotton farmers would lose 50 percent of their market. There would be terrifying and destructive air and submarine raids from Hollywood to Seattle. Finally, there would be a serious loss of morale in the American fighting forces, which are at their worst on passive defense.
>
> In short, passive defense in the Pacific would bring privations which every American citizen would feel every day and in the most painful manner. No American government could afford to subject the country to such a prospect. . . . It means . . . at every step, fighting of the most desperate character known to history, for the Japanese are as admirable on defense as the Americans on attack.

It is to the task of avoiding such an encounter that the State Department is bending its efforts in the realization that one unfortunate incident could bring it about. Its task would be a great deal simpler if the American public were either not so insistent on implementation of its anti-Japanese feeling, or willing to carry it to whatever extreme it might lead. Instead, the United States is in the hazardous position of taking sides without the intention of following through, and with no desire to accept the responsibilities that can accompany international partisanship. Out of such a state of mind, as I have said, in a situation that has no *status quo,* can come loss of face, with its implications of further trouble, or war.

The Language of the Gael

By SISTER JULIE

IT MIGHT not be supposed that anything so unpromising as the study of a language could furnish anything so romantic as disillusionment, but the disillusionment of Gaelic is most painful, even to the middle-aged. I was strongly attracted to the language of the Gael and after a brief acquaintance violently repelled. My attraction did not spring from the fountain of strong Irish feeling, but there was filial devotion in it. My mother is Irish and though not native born, is one of those who cannot speak dispassionately on any Irish question; knowing no Gaelic except *cead mille fealhte,* she was in my wild surmise to rejoice vicariously in my mastery of Ireland's native tongue. I had some notion of teaching her to pray in Gaelic. Syng's Deirdre also allured me, symbol for me of all the loveliness and tragedy of Ireland, and of all the glamour and poetry of ancient Gaelic literature. I wanted to read in their original form the Red Branch stories of which Deirdre is the heroine; I yearned to drink of the pure sparkling waters of the fountain of Irish poetry.

With these emotional elements was mingled an academic interest. Gaelic was coming into philological prominence; several universities and colleges, even in the United States, had established chairs of Gaelic; New York City was said to be honeycombed with private classes in Gaelic; I heard that a Chinese student had registered at one of the famous schools for Gaelic in Ireland. (I think he must have enjoyed himself, and I hope that he is now teaching Gaelic in China. There is considerable resemblance between the two languages. Indeed, I was surprised to find in the language spoken for centuries in the Island of Saints certain characteristics that I can only call unchristian.)

My philological interest was sustained and deepened by an enthusiasm born of idealism; I felt moved to cooperate with the Irish government in this austerely idealistic movement to revive the native language. There is nothing more compelling than idealism. I was ready for austerity, but, alas, what boots it with uncessant care to devote the mind to Gaelic, a language that requires a mind especially constituted and adroitly tempered and a set of vocal organs capable of

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such guttural pitches as cannot even be heard by the ordinary human ear?

Eire

I remember with what complacency I inquired of my Gaelic teacher the correct pronunciation of Ireland's poetic name, *Eire,* when it began to come into general use. Here now, I thought, was proof that Gaelic was a profitable, even a necessary study. I learned that *Eire* is pronounced *A-zha* (long *a* as in *Asia,* but longer). My teacher disclaimed my phonetics, of course. But they spell what I heard. I still say *Eye-ra,* like everybody else.

My experience was, as you may have begun to suspect, an unhappy one.

The Irish of whom I had always thought as walking with perfect nonchalance among saints and angels and fairies greet one another with a phrase admirable, it is true, in content, but not pleasing to the ear. "Gia ditch" (*Dia duit*), say they. It is hard to believe that they are saying "God be with you." And "Bu-al O ye-a ort (*Bail O Dia ort*) "the blessing of God at you." Neither has it a pious sound.

My teacher was one of those Irishmen who remind you immediately of Columba, of Brendan sailing the high seas, of the mantle of Brigid and the book of Kells. He had a passion for Gaelic, which I am convinced has made him the unique master of that impossible language, combined with an utterly uncomprehending guilelessness which kept from him both our incompetence and our smoldering resentment at the eccentricities of the language. Our non-committal manner in class he interpreted as innate modesty; he treated us with regal deference and a gallantry that would have shamed Roxane, writing on the blackboard in his beautiful script, the very sight of which was both an invitation to learn Gaelic and an eloquent rebuke to those who could not learn it.

My teacher's defeat

It is a tragic reflection to me now that so gifted a teacher, a master of his subject and a personality of charm and graciousness, should have been utterly defeated, that the spirit of Gaelic should have been utterly extinguished. And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out. I felt occasionally that he must know that he was casting his pearls. But our Gaelic master gave no hint of recognition. He was like Jeremias, meekly enduring, without even a recognition of the iniquities of the children of Israel. *Go mait slan a beit tu* (go maw slawn ah veh thoo), he would say, without must gusto, it is true, but never suspecting that to us it sounded more like a curse than an approval. *Go mait slan a beit tu* is Gaelic for *Good!* No, I cannot parse it for you, nor can I tell you what a single syllable means literally. But I can explain why the phrase for *Goodnight, Oidce mait duit* is pronounced *ee ha va guit.* It is explained by the principle of aspiration.

When I am most aware that life is a tragedy, I think of this master of an ancient and poetic language willing to share its beauty and richness with us and gradually becoming aware that he must keep it all for himself. I think of him as the disembodied spirit of Gaelic wandering forlorn over the unyielding earth, playing enchanting music for audiences who are stone deaf. I herewith pay tribute to his gentle spirit in recalling what enrichment I have had from Gaelic.

It is a satisfaction to know that the words *whiskey* and *usquebaugh* derive from the Gaelic *uisce beate* (ish-ka ba-ha) (aspiration is operating here also) which means *water of life.* Perhaps I should point out to you the way in which modern usage has weakened this fine phrase, that is to say, *whiskey* means only *water;* we have not kept the qualifying phrase which gives character to the water.

Likewise it is a satisfaction to recognize that the noble name of Doyle means "Black Stranger" and that Sullivan means "One-eyed." On one occasion I was able to explain to the ignorant that *Inisfada* meant merely *Long Island.* This small triumph comforted me in the experience of listening eagerly, and without fruit, to my first Gaelic platform address. The only word I understood in the entire address, which was very eloquent and well delivered, was *agus,* which is Gaelic for *and.* One thing more I shall always remember. It shall be for me a symbol of the gallantry of Ireland's men. The opprobrious term *Omadhan* is a masculine form and it is the only form in use. It could not in Gaelic be used as a feminine. A clear case I think for the refinement of feeling and the instinctive chivalry of Irish men.

Deirdre of the Sorrows never lost her fascination for me, however; and when a small volume of the Red Branch stories was put into my hands, I felt compensated for everything I had endured of humiliation, bewilderment, disappointment and fury. It was worth it all to be able to read about Deirdre and the sons of Naisi in one of those mellowed tales of Ireland's vanished glory. Ichabod, Ichabod. What a change was here! (Look here, upon this picture, and on this.) "One day," I read (I aspired to the production of a now modern version and began to write out my translation with painstaking care), "One day, Conchubar [through aspiration that name is pronounced *Conor*] King of Ulster and the good men and nobles of his household went to the celebration of a feast at the house of Felimid MacDaill, the story teller of Conchubar [Conor] and at the same time the wife of Felimid gave birth to a daughter beautiful and well-formed and at the same time Caffa the Druid who was of the com-

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pany prophesied and foretold that from that daughter would come much sorrow and grief to the two-fifths on her account. Hearing this, the warriors wished the death of the child immediately. It is not to be done, said Conchubar [Conor] but I myself will be responsible and will take her for her education under my protection. Caffa baptized her with the name of Deirdre and Conchubar [Conor] put her in a stronghold and a tutor and a nurse for her care in it and Deirdre was in that mode of living until she was of age and none of the people went to visit her but only her nurse and her tutor and the keening woman of Conchubar whose name was Lavarcham. . . ."

It seemed to me I had better not go on. If I was ever to delight again in Deirdre, I had better see her clear of Gaelic, unencumbered with its graceless verbiage. I shut my eyes and cast the Red Branch from me. I can only hope it was not Paris's choice of Aphrodite instead of Pallas. I have not even opened my Gaelic prayerbook since. (Hardly ever, I mean.)

My mother, who is a combination of Deirdre and Maeve and Saint Brigid and the O'Neills of the Red Hand, could have learned it. Her brains have not been addled by Anglo-Saxon. And whatever iniquity I know about Gaelic, it is the unique glory of that language that it reserves a special form for the name of Mary for the Mother of God. No little Irish colleen is called Muire (Mirzha, if you wish to be strictly Gaelic). Only Herself.

Dream My Dream

At least permit me dreams, strange beast!

I am witness to the armies swirling,
The valleys boiling
Land to land like flood waters West and East;
With sudden hairs the hills stand bristling,
With weapons stiff and brilliant
Faced and silver in the sun.

Then as a rain running
Whispers slant across the million,
As in a wind walking down the wheat
The bayonets obey in waves, the myrmidons
Break ranks, the facing feet
Exchange direction
With a beautiful inflection:
The laughing phalanxes depart as one.

The newshawkers damn my dream this morning:
I know: the people wizen, they are the grass,
They let the monarch sickle pass
And swing from west to east, ubiquitous and scorning
Green blood upright in open veins,—
They are the menstacks piled among the violent stains.

S. Raiziss.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

THAT BERTRAND RUSSELL will be confirmed in his appointment by the Board of Higher Education of New York City and will assume his post at City College amid the plaudits of the champions of "free speech," "liberal thought" and "academic liberty" may be taken for granted. Bishop Manning and his few and non-influential supporters could hardly have expected the result to be otherwise. The tide of public opinion which really counts in our country today and holds directive power in public education is far too strong, and far too ably manipulated, to be resisted by the scattered efforts of a few clergymen and their followers to whom Christian morality is not a mere old-fashioned convention but absoluth truth: the law of God, not the shifting opinions of men. Probably Bishop Manning realized the situation, but considered it his duty to take a stand against it, perhaps with a view to the future course of the Christian struggle against modern paganism rather than with any firm hope of winning the fight against the Russell appointment.

Dr. John Dewey's clarion call to the liberal professors and clergymen and publishers and scientists to resist "clerical" interference with public education struck the key-note of the campaign of which the Russell affair is merely a skirmish, but a highly significant one. All clergymen who confess pragmatism in morality, as well as in other departments of thought and action—all "religious leaders" who agree that morality is a relative and not an absolute value—are of course made gladly welcome among the well organized leaders of contemporary American paganism; but the clergymen and the followers of the clergymen who represent anything even resembling orthodox Christianity are regarded not only as outsiders but definitely as the enemies of the educational system for which the entire population is taxed, and which is by far the most powerful of all agencies for influencing and shaping the masses of our people and their present and future leaders. It is well that this usually undeclared reality should become visible and be clearly recognized. The more that orthodox Christianity is not only ostracized but openly fought against by those who control the policies of the public school system, the sooner the pretence of neutrality in education, as concerns religion and morality, will be dropped, and the underlying issue will come into the open. It will then be apparent that whether our nation will or will not be drawn into the physical fighting of the many wars now raging in the world, we cannot escape participation in the revolutionary struggle against Christianity which is at the root of the violence of our time.

That struggle necessarily must be rendered more difficult for the forces of Christianity by the fact that such great desertions from its ranks have taken place in our schools, colleges and universities at precisely the time when educated Christian leadership would be so valuable. It would, therefore, seem all the more essential for Catholics

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to support ever more effectively and widely their own educational system in preparation for their share in the rapidly developing situation.

Meanwhile, it is interesting and instructive to consider some of the arguments put forward by the supporters of the Board of Higher Education in the Russell controversy. For example, the group of leading book publishers who wrote that, "as publishers, we do not necessarily subscribe personally to all the views expressed by those authors whose books we publish, but we welcome great minds to our lists, particularly now, at a time when brute force and ignorance have gained such ascendancy over reason and intellect in many parts of the world. We think it more than ever important to honor intellectual superiority whenever the opportunity presents itself." The underlying assumption in this argument, of course, is so notorious a fallacy that it is depressing to see it advanced by men in whose hands rests so large a proportion of the book-publishing business of today. They seem to believe that "great minds" must necessarily be hostile to those movements of "brute force and ignorance" which "have gained such ascendancy over reason and intellect in many parts of the world"; and that "intellectual superiority," in itself, detached from all other considerations, must always and everywhere be held in honor. But what about the many great minds which in philosophy and poetry and fiction and drama have taken so dominant a part in preparing and leading the organized revolutions of brute force to which these publishers refer? Have the Nazis and the communists lacked great minds and intellectual leaders of marked superiority to formulate their philosophies, supply them with inspirational literature, and to justify their revolutions so plausibly and eloquently that they have made tens of thousands of converts even outside the countries which they now dominate?

Such historians of these revolutions as have gone to the roots in their studies give ample testimony to the fact that indeed these revolutions were first prepared and planned and supplied with intellectual weapons of great power and cogency by first-class thinkers. Among the "great minds" which prize and praise communism, for example, seems to be the great mind of Bertrand Russell himself. The Board of Higher Education gave to the press certain quotations from Mr. Russell which adversely criticized certain aspects of communism; but Mr. Charles H. Tuttle, a member of that board, alleges that in selecting their quotations from Mr. Russell the board omitted other views, or suppressed them under a row of asterisks. For example, after criticizing certain aspects of communism, Mr. Russell affirmed that "if it [Russian communism] conquers the world, as it may do, it will solve most of the major evils of our time. On these grounds, in spite of reservations, it deserves support." Many other great minds of modern paganism hold similar favorable opinions of Russian communism and write them and teach them and sometimes, as in the case of the Anglican Dean of Canterbury, even preach them from supposedly Christian pulpits. In short, if fixed Christian morals are denied and banned and even persecuted in large parts of the world today, that process was initiated not by the lower ranks of the ignorant and brutal forces which run the Ogpu and the Gestapo, but by philosophers and professors and artists and publishers of marked intellectual superiority. The same type of mind is powerfully represented today among the leaders of education, the press, literature and science, who are preparing the same harvest of destruction that is now being reaped in Russia and Germany and the unfortunate lands and souls that have elsewhere fallen under their domination. And we in America welcome and hail them in the name of liberty of thought and education! And pay out millions of tax money to support their work in the schools.

Communications

MISCASTING MUSSOLINI

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Your leading editorial in the March 8 issue of THE COMMONWEAL, captioned "Miscasting Mussolini," strikes me as a sagacious interpretation of the Dictator's ultimate objective, but on the other hand stresses my own belief, fortified by the deliberate conclusions of others far better and more intimately equipped than I, that Mussolini is by no means a bright man; albeit to call him a stupid egoist would doubtless be exaggerative. That in the event of Teutonic conquest Italian Fascism can not hope to escape his desired fate of Democracies, is apodictive. In the German triumph there will be one Caesar in Europe and he is Hitler.

JOHN VERNOU BOUVIER.

SPANISH REFUGEES

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I read with great interest and sympathy what you have written about France and the problem of Spanish refugees, in THE COMMONWEAL of March 15. As I have worked a great deal for Basque refugees in France, I think I can tell you something of my experiences that might be interesting to your readers.

From the very first days of the evacuation of Euzkadi, the French gave the warmest reception to the suffering Basques, with a real spirit of Christian brotherhood.

The French Government, civil and military officials, the ecclesiastical authorities, the clergy and all the French population cooperated in this work with such abnegation and generosity that the exiled Basques in France felt themselves truly at home.

Several relief committees for the Basques were organized in France. The most important are the "Comité National Catholique d'Accueil aux Basques" and the "Ligue Internationale des Amis des Basques." Among the leading personalities in these organizations we find His Eminence Jean Cardinal Verdier, His Excellency Bishop Clement Mathieu, President Herriot, Champetier de Ribes, Archbishop Feltin, Messieurs Mauriac, Maritain, Pezet, Laurent, Bourdet, Gillet, Dumas and others.

Thousands of Basques have inscribed their names at the offices of the "International League of Friends of the Basques" at 36 Avenue Hoche, Paris, to offer their ser-

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vices to France, and this is the most eloquent proof of their gratitude to the French.

Basques, citizens of different countries in all the Americas, will soon join in another manifestation of gratitude and friendship to France by sending ambulances for the French army. The first Basque ambulance is ready to be shipped to France in the first available steamer.

Any one who is informed about what has been going on in European countries these past years has to recognize that France, the homeland of so many thousands of homeless refugees from all corners of Europe, has handled the refugee problem in the most wise and generous way possible under the circumstances.

As to the last paragraph of your editorial, you can imagine how wholly I agree with you, as you know to what extent I consider that the charity of Christ should be in the first line of all the humanitarian enterprises, present in all the miseries of the world and governing the actions of all men. M. DE YNCHAUSTI, K.S.G.

CATHOLIC TEACHERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: As another Catholic teacher in the public schools, (New York City) I must take issue with A. E. Quigley ("Catholic Teachers in Public Schools," March 8) on several points.

The sections of the article in which the author deplores the treatment of certain controversial questions, give the impression that only one side of these questions—the non-Catholic side—is presented in his school, and, by implication, in other schools. This surely is deplorable, but to indicate, as I think the author does, that the Catholic teacher's answer to this consists of his militantly presenting his Catholic point of view, as such, is dangerous, if not an actual violation of accepted principles of academic freedom. Surely the Catholic teacher's most valuable contribution to such a situation would be his example of good teaching, in which he would see to it that all points of view were impartially presented in the discussion of a controversial question. To answer intolerance by setting up an equally militant Catholic opposition is not constructive, but is, instead, a negation of much of what Catholicism should represent.

Does the author, in quoting his Catholic pupil's question on the church's attitude on the Spanish question, mean to indicate that the pupil had been given the wrong point of view? The pupil may well have been poorly informed, but to imply today that the church's attitude was correct, is attempting to answer a question which, I think, no reasonable person attempts today to answer with a "yes" or "no."

The author's comment that ours has become a "Sunday religion" may be true, but I do not believe for an instant that the public school is to blame for this deplorable condition. The parent, supplemented by the priest, is the real teacher of religion. If the parent, in his intimate, everyday contact with the child, and the priest, through his church services and parish work, cannot teach the child that our religion is a way of life, what can a public school teacher be expected to do? ELIZABETH SHERIDAN.

The Stage & Screen

A Passenger to Bali

WITH ONE or two exceptions my colleagues on the daily papers did not like "A Passenger to Bali." I found Ellis St. Joseph's play one of the most interesting things of the year: the theme provocative, the writing skilful, the acting admirable. It all goes to show how personal is the business of dramatic criticism. Mr. St. Joseph tells the story of a mysterious personage who gets himself taken as a passenger by the captain of a British freighter in the Far East. He pretends to be a clergyman, but when he arrives in Bali the authorities unmask him as a man who wherever he is causes trouble and incipient revolution. They refuse to allow him to land as does later every other port, and the unhappy captain is forced to carry the "Rev." Mr. Wilkes back and forth, while he gets the crew to the verge of revolt. A storm saves the situation, as the crew has watched him, in a drunken brawl at the height of the storm, throw overboard a Lascar. The crew returns to discipline and the captain leaves Mr. Wilkes to go down with the ship, while he and his men row to safety.

It is evident that it is Mr. St. Joseph's intention to make Mr. Wilkes a symbol of the sort of leader that either communism or fascism spews to the surface, but it is not necessary to take him this way to enjoy the play. The symbolism is implicit, or at least only definitely voiced in a few speeches. Perhaps realism is violated by not having the captain put his unwelcome passenger ashore in a boat; he surely could have done it; but if we forgive this one weakness the play proves its impact, its gathering terror. Moreover the characterizations are excellent. As for the acting, Walter Huston as Mr. Wilkes gives what was to me the finest acting of his career, and Colin Keith-Johnston as the Captain, Edgar Stehli as the Dutch port officer and William Harrigan and Victor Beecroft as the two ship's officers are worthy compasions. As for the storm, it couldn't have been better even in the movies. *(At the Ethel Barrymore Theatre.)*

The Weak Link

ALLAN WOODS'S crook play is not a masterpiece, but it serves to while away an evening. It has many amusing moments and a number of exciting ones. If the story is a little preposterous; if the hero and his girl could have escaped from the clutches of their would-be murderers half a dozen times, and with the greatest ease—this is apt to be the case in crook plays. The hero of the present one is a little chess-player and inventor of burglar alarms who, under the guns of the crooks, plan for them the perfect burglary, which they fumble because they make one move he hadn't planned for them to make. Of course at the end the hero gets his girl, though why he should want to get as complete an idiot as ever playwright concocted for his heroine passeth my understanding at least. The play is skilfully acted, especially by Hume Cronyn

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as the chess-playing hero, and by Lloyd Gough, Don Costello, Edmund Dorsey and Ray Mayer as the crooks. *(At the John Golden Theatre.)* GRENVILLE VERNON.

Port Huron, Alcatraz and Points East

HOLLYWOOD now combines its yen for serials with its yen for film biographies and gives us *"Young Tom Edison"* (Part Two, with Spencer Tracy, follows soon). Although it almost smothers Tom under sentiment, family and dramatic suspense, some of the inventor's early life does seep through; and regardless of the foreword's explanation that this is a story of the courage and triumph of a typical American boy, Mickey Rooney restrains himself to make Tom more than just another Andy Hardy. The picture's moral (don't be the parents of a genius) is emphasized by the good performance of George Bancroft, the stern father who finds his addle-pated son quite a problem, and of Fay Bainter, the loving mother who won't believe her son is "touched" and teaches him that the world is bigger than Port Huron, Michigan. Tom continues to put his insatiable curiosity and inventive imagination to work in spite of ridicule of the smug townsfolk and finally proves to the community and audience in two thrilling scenes that whoever said that he had "the Yankee trait for tinkering with useless things" was guilty of gross understatement.

Because your sympathies are never won by any of the people in *"The House Across the Bay,"* you passively watch Racketeer George Raft being exposed for income tax evasion by his own beautiful, chorus-girl wife, Joan Bennett, who thinks a year in prison will save him from gangster's bullets. You still don't care very much as Joan starts her ten year wait while George sits in Alcatraz. And you care even less when Joan's pretty head is bothered by the evil intentions of Raft's shrewd lawyer, Lloyd Nolan, or the more honorable intentions of the nice airplane inventor, Walter Pidgeon. By the time Raft breaks out of Alcatraz, you wonder how Walter Wanger ever happened to produce this melodramatic nonsense.

In *"Road to Singapore"* Bing Crosby and Bob Hope have a swell time clowning around and providing fun for the audience as long as they abide by their resolution: "No more women of any size, shape or color." But in Kaigoon, Dorothy Lamour steps in and chooses between the two "dopey-looking clucks" and the fun is over. Director Victor Schertzinger should have taken better care of his boys.

If you take the phony story in *"Zanzibar"* in its stride, you'll find the biggest collection of vicarious thrills and unintentional laughs that have been packed into a B movie in a long time. Watch Lola Lane, a lady explorer who knows Africa "better than anyone else," climb into the darkest interior to get the missing skull of Sultan Mkwawa. See her ship-wrecked during a typhoon with a bunch of cats (lions and leopards to you). See her lead an animal hunt, snatched from the jaws of crocodiles, from the tortures of wild natives, from an erupting volcano. But don't worry about Lola. She'll turn up again when four daughters become four wives and have four grandchildren. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

Vitamins A, B

Meditations in Wall Street. Anonymous. Introduction by Albert Jay Nock. Morrow. $1.50.

MR. ALBERT JAY NOCK some time ago discovered a "Wall Street" man who is a mighty reader. Part of his office equipment consists of a library including Xenophon, Juvenal, Homer, Lucretius, Montaigne, Plato, Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, Pascal (translations), together with Pater, Arnold, Swift, Emerson, Ruskin and others.

Mr. "A. B." (as Mr. Nock cloaks his anonymity) has long been in the habit of jotting down his impressions and reflections on about everything in human life, and Mr. Nock has selected from this material about one-fifth, and presented the jottings with his own introduction in this small volume of "Meditations."

The scope of these meditations may be gathered from the fact that they are grouped in no less than forty-five separate categories. Some of these categories are rather comprehensive: for example, "Time and Change," "Superstition," "Conscience," "Religion and Dogma," "Wisdom and Knowledge," "Truth" and "Metaphysics," to mention only a few. Most of the entries under the forty-five heads run to no more than three or four lines, and the whole collection is included in one hundred and twenty-three small pages, 7¼ x 4 inches, lines liberally spaced and margined.

Much reading, said Bacon, maketh a full man. Mr. "A. B." has unquestionably read much. What sort of "fullness" does this little book display? Well, for one thing, the good company which "A. B." has kept has, clearly, given him a notable care, compactness and a certain pleasant "saltiness" of expression which makes easy reading. He has a nice turn of "pawky" humor, has shrewdly observed the many weaknesses, inconsistencies, vanities and little pretenses of mankind, and evinces for these a certain sympathetic tolerance—all excellent things, so far as they go. Of the thought that finds expression so pleasantly, this reviewer is compelled to say that its reach, alas! is in inverse ratio to the depth of the matters in hand. For example, "A religious system," our author tells us, "is an assemblage of guesses." Again he asks: "Why waste theological systems on an effort to unite the divine and human natures which were One to begin with?" There are not a few instances of this sort of thing, in reading which this reviewer found himself murmuring "Life is just a bowl of cherries!" But for every one of these, there could be quoted at least two or three comments in lighter vein on men and things, each enshrining a piece of real truth well observed and expressed, far too numerous for quotation here and now. Those who like their vitamins in tabloid form will find these vitamins of "A. B." pleasant to take.

There is one significant remark by "A. B." which perhaps explains the whole: "When study becomes labor we had better change the subject promptly." And this prompts the present reviewer to suggest that Mortimer Adler's recently published volume, "How to Read a Book," be added to "A. B.'s" downtown library. The reason for the suggestion will be apparent to anyone who has read both that book and the "Meditations."

THOMAS F. WOODLOCK.

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BIOGRAPHY

His Dear Persuasion: the Life of Elizabeth Ann Seton. Katherine Burton. Longmans. $2.50.

IN HER own vivid style Mrs. Burton once again tells a grand story. Little Betty Bayley grew up in New York during the Revolution. Her father was a Tory, but had the faculty of making himself *persona grata* with the American authorities. They not only respected him for his honesty but almost revered him for his charity. To his daughter he used to sign himself "Your friend and father." Much of Elizabeth's character was derived from him, though it was her step-mother who developed a disposition naturally religious. Yet even as a child she read Rousseau's "Emile." "Dear J. J.," she wrote in her diary, "I am yours." Nor did she quite cease to be his when she began her educational work as a Catholic.

There followed a fine marriage with the prosperous young merchant, William Seton, the birth of five children in quick succession, her husband's untimely death, and the establishment of a small private school in New York for the support of her family. Friends came forward with financial aid, and one of these friends, Antonio Filicchi of Leghorn, drew her into the Church. Even while she was staying in Italy people used to say that if she were not a heretic she would be a saint. By becoming a Catholic she had to drag herself painfully out by the roots and estranged most of her relatives and friends. The crisis came suddenly: she went to communion at Trinity Church, but passing St. Peter's on Barclay Street made what was for her the decisive gesture of the sign of the cross. As Mrs. Burton puts it, "She had gone to church a Protestant and had come home a Catholic."

Archbishop Carroll and Bishop Cheverus of Boston found work for her to do, first in Baltimore and later in Emmitsburg. Antonio Filicchi opened his purse again, as did the wealthy Mr. Cooper who, after entering the Church, proceeded to the priesthood. As for Mr. Emmit, after whom Emmitsburg was named, he found a flaw in the title to her property, but dropped dead before he could institute legal action. It was in the little town under the Blue Ridge, with Mount St. Mary's College a mile or two away, that her great, if brief, work was done. Here she had the joy of seeing two sisters enter the Church, and then the sorrow of seeing them and her daughter Annina—the first professed member of her new community—die of tuberculosis. Rebecca, her youngest daughter, died too, and it was not long before the rigors of Emmitsburg proved too much for Mother Seton herself. But her work was already firmly established. Her valorous heart had cried, "Had I been a man the whole world would not be enough for me. I would tread in the footsteps of Saint Francis Xavier." Her adventures, however, had to be vicariously performed by her friends Dubois and DuBourg and Bruté and Flaget, all of whom became bishops, some of them pushing to the *ultima thule* of the frontier. Even her Episcopalian minister, Henry Hobart, obtained his bishopric. It would seem that to know Elizabeth Seton was a quick road to the mitre.

Mrs. Burton has already shown that she has a private recipe for the writing of biography. The main element, that of the author's human warmth, is incommunicable. But she understands, as an experienced journalist, how to make biography as readable as fiction, though some, who prefer their biography "straight," will wonder if she is not at times too much of a novelist. Personally I do not greatly object to her taking off the top of people's heads and peeping inside, for the method is used with discretion, and Elizabeth's diary and letters are amply drawn upon. We are left with the conviction that here is the genuine Mother Seton. When near the end of her life she wrote to a friend, "I shall be wild Betty to the last breath." And to do her justice, she was. Perhaps that is why she achieved what she did. There are many who look for her ultimate canonization. This is a brilliant book, offsetting "the malady of the period: the decorating of all landscapes with funeral urns and weeping willows." But it badly needs an index. THEODORE MAYNARD.

The Private and Public Life of Socrates. René Kraus. Doubleday. $3.00.

VILFREDO PARETO said once of Salomon Reinath's "Orpheus": "It is the history of religion seen through the *Affaire Dreyfus.*" René Kraus, an Austrian exile, may claim that if he injects modern issues, at least he does so openly and discriminatingly. There is no doubt that the Peloponnesian War concerns us as closely as any period in history. The same struggle, between land and sea power, between free intellect and crude traditionalism, carried on through thirty harrowing years of warfare, *diktats,* delusive intervals of peace and the self-destroying automatic process of power politics. Moreover, this setting of Socrates's life story against the tormented background of his time puts a startling significance on his political non-commitments: as indeed and in more ways than one the present crisis of thought is socratic in character; more so than even René Kraus would like to admit. If we are willing to see Nicias as the statesman with the umbrella, one also ought to show Protagoras walking among us in the shape of John Dewey. But maybe this is treading on dangerous ground. It is easy to see the author has not much feeling for the actual set-up of Greek thought. The core would be hopelessly strange anyhow to a modern Western intellectual, and an exiled *Sozialdemokrat* particularly may be forgiven if he makes the Athenian speak like a pupil of Kant and Dilthey.

These are pathetic times for lay theologians. Every turn of events shows up their ethical generalities. Let us admit this Socrates does not come off. Socrates was the first modern man, hence far ahead of Mr. Kraus. But then one comes to realize how essentially a mystery the man has become through the creative wizardry of his disciple, and how hopeless it is to try and unscramble him from Plato. At least this is an attempt not lacking in either charm or carefulness. Compared with the debunking antics of another recent author who tries to unmask Socrates as a fascist, it provides healthful mental exercise. Will no one try a third and not wholly implausible way—a really disagreeable Socrates in the guise of Georges Sorel? GEORGE DE SANTILLANA.

A Liberal in Wartime. Walter Nelles. Norton. $2.50.

THIS BOOK has as sub-title "The Education of Albert DeSilver" and deals with the mental awakening of a young liberal of the first World War period. This awakening, needless to say, did not come as a result of his four years at Yale, nor as an effect of three years spent in studying law at Columbia. DeSilver remained mentally dormant while being exposed to what was considered safe at those two well endowed sanctuaries of the *status quo,* but was awakened by the tumult of the Progressive campaign in 1912. He lost the fear which he had previously entertained for the "radical" ideas of Theodore

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Roosevelt, and entered into the campaign with some interest, but apparently with a conviction that nothing very concrete would result from it. Having inherited money, he was not looking for a political berth as a reward for his labors.

The most interesting parts of the biography are those sections dealing with the efforts of Albert DeSilver, Roger Baldwin and others in the organization that was to be known as the Civil Liberties Union to preserve a shred of freedom of expression in wartime America. That was difficult immediately after the War, as well as during the War, due to the colossal stupidity of Attorney General Palmer. To anyone who thinks that America was a free democracy during the last War, or that it will be during the next one, this book can be recommended. DeSilver, despite statements made by his enemies, was neither a radical nor a communist, as his letters that are quoted amply prove. He simply refused to admit that all democracy should disappear because of the viewpoints of ignorant politicians and officials at Washington. The continuity of the book is unfortunately not well maintained. It is honestly written, however, and deals with an American who was willing to sacrifice his money and social position in a sustained effort to make America a decent place in which to live, even during the insanity of wartime.

PAUL KINIERY.

Three Portraits: Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin. Emil Ludwig. Alliance. $1.50.

SHORT and trivial and rather dull renderings of the dictators in the Ludwig style. The great-mannish, psychological, fate-ridden approach to history dominates, but, especially in the Stalin essay, there are incursions of the Stalinist fellow traveler attitude. This appears as a too easy acceptance of the official CP view of Stalin's place in early Russian revolutionary history. Mussolini's portrait is least unattractive, and it furnishes the most interesting new business: Mussolini's religious (or unreligious) statement which, in Italy, was later quitely killed.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The American Stakes. John Chamberlain. Carrick and Evans. $2.75.

THE LATE 1930's will probably be remembered in liberal circles as the days of revolt against Marxism. Now John Chamberlain, literary critic and *Fortune* editor, opens the 1940's with a clear-cut statement of the anti-Marxist liberal's position on American political economy. He writes with plenty of what H. L. Mencken used to call "bounce," and he seems to know what is going on. In consequence "The American Stakes" is very good reading and pretty good theory.

Mr. Chamberlain might shudder at the thought, but there is a real resemblance between his economic ideas and those of the Catholic Church. At least he sees what most of the disillusioned fellow-travelers haven't yet grasped; namely, that socialism and tyranny are inseparable, or that private ownership of most production is a *sine qua non* for the protection of individual liberty.

He also believes, with the Church, that a "concert" of existing classes and pressure groups is possible, whereby class war may be resolved in compromise and proper restraints provided for the chiselers. Further, he favors the consumer cooperative movement, much stronger trade unions, a decent price control and decentralized industry (speaking not unkindly of the "Chesterbelloc distributists). All of which doesn't add up to the Popes' organic society of vocational groups, but is still sound as far as it goes.

The amazing thing, however, is that Mr. Chamberlain arrives at the conclusions in spite of a fairly complete misunderstanding of first principles, simply by a kind of common-sense backtracking from the blind-alleys of Marxism. But common sense deserts him somewhere along the line. So enamored is he of Murray Godwin's analysis of the State as a glorified "racket" that he concludes that "the State is the result of man's predatory proclivities" and that states can only be distinguished as between "strict rackets" and "limited rackets." And the reasoning is so flimsy (the logical conclusion would be anarchism, from which he again backtracks) that one suspects the concept appealed to him mostly because it contained so much hardboiled, cynical "bounce."

All in all, however, Mr. Chamberlain has triumphed over his background and written a reasonable, interesting book. There are extremely penetrating chapters on the Democratic Party, FDA and LaGuardia, and US foreign policy. In fact, it ill behooves us to be so patronizing. We sincerely hope Mr. Chamberlian keeps up the good work and converts all the remaining Marxists to at least partial sanity.

JOHN C. CORT.

FICTION

It Was Like This. Two Stories of the Great War. Hervey Allen. Farrar & Rinehart. $1.75.

THE AUTHOR of a best seller, who is also a veteran of the last war, undertakes in this book the task of telling potential fighters of the present generation what modern warfare is like. He presents two short stories and an introduction in which he outlines his *Kriegsphilosophie.* If you want reality, raw reality, war, it seems, isn't so bad after all. "Battle," we are told, "is an experience of complete and unmitigated reality." It tears aside the shams of civilization, and, in the consequent vision of "blind force operating by pure chance," one sees "the nature and end of everything." If this is true, one of two consequences must follow: either mankind is happier in a state of illusion, or war, since it can give us reality, is a great good, the means of attaining the beatific vision. The author, of course, inclines to the first alternative. Also, although he expects to be disappointed in both cases, he hopes the United States will stay out of this war and that men will decide to give up war altogether. But, if his theory of peace illusion and war reality becomes current, someone is certain to accept the second alternative and its consequent diabolical gospel, "Blessed are the war-makers, for they shall show us things as they are." Then it won't be necessary to go to Europe in order to write first-hand accounts of nihilism. Yet the philosophy of "reality" which underlies this theory of war is common in America today, particularly in novels. Perhaps discussion may anticipate events in proving it a dangerous toy.

The two stories are gruesome enough but rather less exciting than the introduction. In the first, battle imposes on a self-reliant young lieutenant the fixed idea that he must carry out at all costs an order to report to his major. In the second, an innocent boy, permitted by his mother to enlist before he is of age, becomes the toughest man in the company and, when captured, decapitates his German guard with a sickle. This story is marred by the presence of one Pap Maginn, a common fictional type whose stage Irish is not the only unreal thing about him. But this

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defect is compensated for by some good satire on patrioteering females. Both stories are readable, but neither accomplishes its purpose. That sleepless men with jangled nerves reveal hitherto unsuspected aspects of their characters is not news. The imaginative will learn from the stories nothing about war that they have not already surmised, and the realism is not intense enough, not visceral enough, to stir the unimaginative to a just sense of what they are in for if war comes. In fact, some may suspect that the realism of the book is only superficial, the covering of a deep-going and unconscious romanticism.

CHARLES DONAHUE.

The Two Wives. Frank Swinnerton. Doubleday. $2.50.

THIS IS the story of the effect which several unimportant women had on several unimportant men. All speak their lines in a shoddy story, as weak and worthless as some of the vehicles written for Sam Barnabas. For Sam is an actor, apparently in the great tradition, who yearns to get out of slapstick into serious drama; who knows he is good, and wears vivid shirts and a tilted hat to show it; who lets a dull wife leave him, a stupid sister sponge on him, a myopic mother sneer and a journalistic brother envy; who finally lets himself in for a forced-marriage with an angel-faced playwright, who puts him into a play of her writing and robs him both of honors and of honor. Daphne, the gold-digger, has been drawn better in the most ordinary of detective stories. Brother Hugh becomes entangled with Nellie, the working girl, and kills his wife—using the suggestion contained in Sam's latest play. Sam's first Mrs. Barnabas, told she is no longer wanted, spitefully commits suicide—which is extremely convenient to the plot. Francine and Montague, perennials in drawing-room fiction, fill in the gaps with gossip, and everyone worries and worries about the effects of adverse publicity. Perhaps to keep the book from being mistaken as the Victorian melodrama it basically is, there are smirks of Freudian modernism arranged amid the antique stage property. At the end of it all, Mary, the faithful secretary, wins the puzzled Pagliacci—although one wonders why she wants the victory.

There is some success in the portrait of Sam: unpleasant as he is, he possesses some fulness. Neither Agatha nor Nellie, the two women in Hugh's life, are drawn beyond the merest suggestion. There is little struggle anywhere: and there was room for good contrast between Hugh and Sam, room for good psychoanalysis of the situations they brought on themselves. In places there is fine writing: the concise descriptions Mr. Swinnerton gives as entr'actes, and his wealth of figures of speech. But these touches of style are not enough. Generally there is room only for sorrow. As Paul, the producer, is made to say: "unless a man or a book or a play went on getting better and better to the end, he or it must fail."

JAMES E. TOBIN.

The Crazy Hunter. Kay Boyle. Harcourt. $2.50.

THE TITLE STORY, the longest in this book of three short stories, brings the relationships between three people into acute perspective through their reactions to a stag-faced gelding, a leggy, "bad-blood somewhere" horse whose purchase was a mistake. Adolescent Nan, hating her mother's efficiency, still unsure of her own objectives in this practical world, fights to the last to save the horse. The masculine mother, solidly certain of herself, the brains and money of this stud farm, signs the death warrant for the useless animal. And Candy, the

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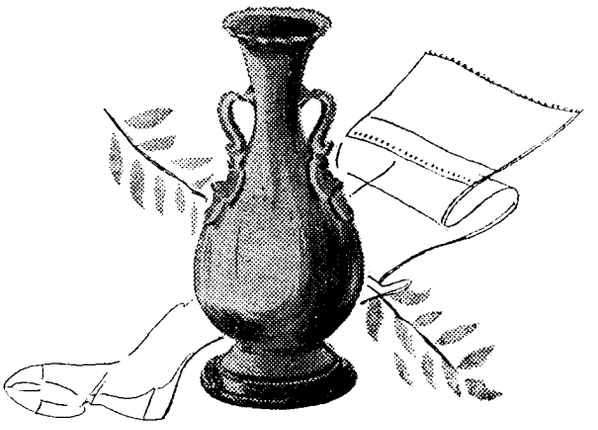

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father, the farm's idle flaw who bought this "luxury item," a middle-aged man with "the curse of nothing to come," obsessed by his shapeless life, defeated by the emptiness of his wife's horsey world, meets his doom through the menace of the hated horses. The gelding's sudden blindness strains and breaks the reins that hold this family in control.

Kay Boyle tells her stories in beautifully written though definitely mannered prose which allows her, in the midst of a tense conversation, to describe the lace petticoat on a Dresden figurine. Excellent figures of speech, carefully wrought phrases, like "perishable as the tinting of a robin's egg with the same fragile quality of an egshell blown clean of any future purpose in life," and "The thesaurus for the uneasy, the lonely, the despairing, was not yet off the press" reward the reader for the difficulties of her style. Even in a less-successful, forced story like "Big Fiddle," in which she fails to understand or make us understand an ex-Catholic young man who is possessed by a crime, and in which the conclusion does not justify the story's complicated pattern, Miss Boyle's fascinating portrayal of carefully selected, but seemingly unimportant, details holds the reader spellbound. In a story of setting and mood like "The Bridegroom's Body," in which the loneliness of a dreary man-world on a malevolent English estate abandoned to the willfullness of wind, rain and purely male desire influences the characters and ends in a strange manifestation of love, the author's powerful skill is exhibited at its superb best. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

A Man of Forty. Gerald Bullett. Knopf. $2.50.

MR. BULLETT belongs to that school of British writers which might be classified as diligent but dull. They have a rather accurate knowledge of the psychology of certain rather staid people, they make no mistakes in grammar and many of them, including Mr. Bullett, have even written books about the novel. But somehow they just don't manage to write very interestingly.

Mr. Bullett's satire is at the expense of such vulnerable people as advertising copy writers, pensioned government employees, and their women. A duller lot would be difficult to imagine. Mr. Bullett is probably the last person to believe he has preached a sermon, but he has. Sins of the flesh will get you into trouble, writes Mr. Bullett, and dull home life is inescapably best. Sometimes his satire gets mixed up with his pity and no one, perhaps not even Mr. Bullett, knows just what to think.

He intersperses various quaint asides to explain things, just as one is becoming interested in the fact that his implications are sometimes unstressed; and for the last fifth, the book turns into a murder mystery, with the villain readily discernible some pages before the end. To this old anglophobe, it looks like one more sign of British decadence. HARRY SYLVESTER.

MISCELLANEOUS

Three's a Crew. Kathrene Pinkerton. Carrick and Evans, Inc. $2.75.

FROM SEATTLE to Muir Glacier, above Juneau in Alaska, during seven years of summering in cabin cruisers, the Pinkerton family passed through the kaleidoscopic scenery of one of the world's most awe-inspiring coast-lines, peopled with fishermen, handloggers, pioneers, motor boaters, like themselves, and the first settlers, the Indians—also with the wild animal life that teemed along the coastal shores. The recounting of all this, coupled with their own personal affairs, which took in a little of upholstering, painting and other chores that go with the ownership of a boat, and their two main occupations, navigating and writing, make up a story that lifts one out of the rut of ordinary living.

Written in a lively, personal and amusing way, the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Pinkerton and their small daughter who were respectively skipper, mate and bo'sun, held to all good traditions of the sea, and are spiced with many a laugh, for they were all amateurs in motor boating. But none was lacking in a most precious human quality, a good sense of humor, and all could stand and give kidding in a most amusing way.

The book is well filled with photographs of the beautiful places along that coast, but without the glowing descriptions of color and grandeur supplied by the pen of Mrs. Pinkerton they would be just another set of pictures.

The people they associated with could well fill a book by themselves, and especially that particular breed called handloggers; from all reports each individual of that calling takes on the glow of a Paul Bunyan. The supreme character they met is a doctor in Alaska who by all accounts had a "Heavenly Underwriting" against all forms of danger that lay in wait for those of us who are too efficient.

The narrative ends rather sadly for readers in the Pinkerton's decision to settle down and give up their boat; for a child will grow up and must have proper education. But let us hope that they will, by hook or crook, go a-voyaging again to far horizons, for all arm-chair explorers will miss Mrs. Pinkerton's cheerful and amusing and vivid way with a pen. PHILIP H. WILLIAMS.

POETRY

The Collected Poems of A. E. Housman. Holt. $3.00.

WERE a poll taken of all contemporary poets, few could deny a great technical and esthetic debt to A. E. Housman. Indeed, it is comparatively easy to trace actual borrowings in the work of some of them, turns of phrase and rhythms that stem directly out of the "Shropshire Lad." His influence, however, is at once more subtle and more widespread in this; his poems have acted as a spur to many an adolescent mind and have indicated, often for the first time and with the force of a revelation, that poetry is not the work solely of illustrious dead men, but a living and contemporary art. This appeal to the young is double in its force. Both technically and temperamentally it touches the opening, artistic mind.

As, presumably, the few additional poems given at the end of this edition represent the last of Mr. Housman's work we are to have, it is unfortunate that the author's literary executors have chosen to suppress or overlook the very witty parody of a Greek drama which appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* many years ago, and was reprinted in Sir John Squire's anthology, "Apes and Peacocks." It is unfortunate, too, that the very fine translation of a poem of Sappho on page 169 is printed as an original poem and not accredited to its original author as are the other translations. The new poems given us in this edition are as fastidious and perfect in their way as were their predecessors.

The appearance of such a definitive, collected edition as this demands an attempt at a final judgment. Housman's art, viewed now in retrospect, was small but complete. Not for nothing had he been associated all his life with the lyrical poetry of Greece and Rome; his own

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work has the seemingly unlabored perfection of his models. Technically, no word of disparagement may be said; the grace of well-ordered language was in everything Housman permitted the public to see. The spare, austere imagery, wedded so intimately to his thought, has the same, *final* quality we associate with Landor's finest work. Yet in Landor, proud, bitter and eccentric as he was, there was more dignity than in Housman, more of the high seriousness whereof Arnold spoke. The pessimism in Housman is overdone; it grows querulous and small; it is a cultured Englishman complaining about his tea, rather than a great, thwarted spirit grown sullen before the disorder and injustice of the world. The very appeal of Housman to the young, the beginner in poetry, is a sign of his essential weakness. The young to whom he appeals will grow beyond him. In his long, solitary life, his mental vision never expanded to embrace anything but a young man's disillusionment and the sadness of a lost faith. He belongs to that period of a man's intellectual life when Samuel Butler is cosmic and George Moore a genuine artist.

Yet how beautifully has he phrased and made vocal that single emotion, too superficial for tragedy, too universal for casual dismissal! Regardless of his artistic restrictions, there are poems within the covers of this book which will be remembered long. Each of us will have his own choice, but mine will be for that masterpiece of epigram, "Epitaph for an Army of Mercenaries," for the classic, "With Rue My Heart Is Laden," and for the poem numbered XXXI of the "Shropshire Lad," "On Wenlock Edge, the wood's in trouble."

J. G. E. HOPKINS.

SCIENCE

Faiths That Healed. Dr. Ralph H. Major. Appleton-Century. $3.00.

BEGINNING as he does with an imagined description of an ancient Roman's visit to the shrine of Aesculapius at Epidaurus and ending with a brief chapter on the Salem witches, this new volume by the author of "Disease and Destiny" is intended by him, one could fancy, as a sketchy review of faith healing with the emphasis on the fact that there is no evidence that faith has ever healed anything but the perturbed spirit of mankind. Yet he states that "a detached impartial judge, if there be such, who is neither a Christian nor an anti-Christian, would perhaps agree with Zola that scientifically the miracles at Lourdes could neither be proved nor denied." For all this, he endeavors to be fair and quotes Bertrin's testimony in favor of the miraculous character of the Lourdes cures as well the contrary testimony of Janet.

The chapters that follow treat briefly of such varied medieval and modern matters as the dance of Saint Vitus, tarantism, the pied piper, the children's crusades, the miracle of Bolsena, Theresa Neumann, the bloody boy, Saint Catherine and a few other records of the stigmata, Hildegard of Bingen, Swedenborg, the king's healing touch and the competition of Valentine Greatrakes with this, mesmerism, Perkins's tractors, Charcot, Quimby, Mrs. Eddy, Dowie and witchcraft. The author makes no pretense at any profound discussion of these phenomena. He accepts, for example, the naturalistic "explanation" of the stigmata and expounds rather than explains the case of Theresa Neumann. The volume is calculated to satisfy morbid curiosity rather than to edify the faithful or to satisfy the scientific mind.

EDWARD L. KEYES.

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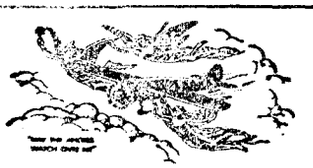

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The Inner Forum

CATHOLIC organizations in England have undergone interesting transformation in war time, according to a recent issue of the *Catholic Herald*. The Young Christian Workers, who have doubled the number of sections, have launched a monthly Leaders' Bulletin and a Priests' Bulletin; they now produce their own magazine in rotogravure. Each section also keeps in touch by mail with its mobilized members. This year's Easter study weekend is a preliminary to a national campaign for family allowances.

The Catholic Truth Society continues to issue and distribute thousands of pamphlets. Of the 11 new pamphlets issued since early September, perhaps the most successful was "The Pope's Five Peace Points," which sold 49,000 copies in the first six weeks of publication. "The 'Simple Prayer Book' has been greatly in demand for soldiers." The Catholic Evidence Guild reports that its activities have been gravely hampered by black-outs and mobilization of speakers. The organization is more deeply concerned by the breaking up of study and leader-training classes.

The St. Vincent de Paul Society continues its work of visiting the homes of the poor week after week. Mobilization has naturally curtailed attendance at weekly meetings; air raid precaution work is another factor, but the work goes on. The war has stimulated the Society to urge their families to take up backyard gardening. In this they cooperate with the Quakers and the National Allotment Society. The Grail has experienced trying difficulties. Teachers sent out into the country with their school children have turned to catechetical work. Headquarters has been moved. Scattered members keep in touch by means of a monthly bulletin, while the monthly magazine continues to be issued regularly.

Hostels of the Legion of Mary in the city of Liverpool have been moved to the country. The Legion helps keep city children off the streets by holding frequent classes for them in formerly evacuated districts. Black-outs have made family visitors more welcome.

CONTRIBUTORS

Henry TETLOW in the old Mencken-Nathan days used to write on cosmetics for the *American Mercury;* more recently he has been writing on country life in books and THE COMMONWEAL.
Theodore MAYNARD, poet, essayist, biographer, recently completed his life of Saint Vincent de Paul.
Glen PERRY is a correspondent in Washington for the New York *Sun*.
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Harry SYLVESTER writes stories for popular magazines; he is again included in this year's O'Brien volume.
Philip H. WILLLIAMS works at changing the Connecticut landscape.
J. G. E. HOPKINS writes fiction and teaches at Notre Dame College, Staten Island.
Edward L. KEYES, M.D., is one of the founders of THE COMMONWEAL and one of the country's most be-medalled medical men.

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